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PRESS RELEASE

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Military Idol Takes the Stage at 10 Europe Sites

By Doriann Fengler, U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center

HEIDELBERG, GE—Excitement is building for the first *"Military Idol"* competition, coming to 10 Army installations in Europe in August.

The multi-week competition combines the enormous popularity of the television show *"American Idol"* with the talents of amateur military performers, as service members compete to see if they have what it takes to be number one and named the *"Military Idol."*

The U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, in Alexandria, Va., has secured a licensing agreement with Fremantle Media, the co-producer and licensor of *"American Idol"*, to use the *"American Idol"* concept for the *"Military Idol"* competition.

The competition will be taking place at 35 Army installations worldwide during the months of August and September. Hosted by Installation Management Agency-Europe Morale, Welfare and Recreation, *"Military Idol"* sites here include Ansbach, Bamberg, Baumholder, SHAPE/Chievres, Darmstadt, Hanau, Heidelberg, Hohenfels, Wiesbaden and Würzburg.

The top "Idol" at each installation wins \$500, an additional \$500 for their unit fund, and will advance to compete in the national Army-wide competition for bragging rights as the Army's top *"Military Idol"* and a chance to win \$1,000. Installation second place winners receive \$250; third place winners take home \$100.

The national finals are 17-22 October at Fort Gordon, Ga., and offer the opportunity for a global stage for *"Military Idol"* contestants.

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"The Pentagon Channel will air a 90-minute live broadcast of the '*Military Idol*' finals, with preview trailers leading up to the final week. A 30-minute documentary will be shot and produced through Army Entertainment and aired several times between the installation finals and the national competition," said Army Entertainment spokesperson Tim Higdon.

"While it's not final, the Pentagon Channel has also expressed interest in hosting the live Web cast and permitting voting through their pentagonchannel.com Web site," Higdon said.

Active duty service members from all branches are eligible to compete. Contestants must meet height and weight standards, have passed their last physical fitness test and provide a Commander's letter of intent to release to attend the national finals if the participant is the installation winner. Participants must compete in an amateur status and may not sing professionally in an official capacity for the military or have a current managed recording career.

The "*Military Idol*" event is a vocal performance competition only. First round auditions will be a cappella and judged only by a three-judge panel. For subsequent rounds of competition, performers must provide CD format accompaniment, and both the judges and audience determine who moves to the semi-finals and finals. Audience vote alone will determine the semi-final and "*Military Idol*" winners.

Complete "*Military Idol*" eligibility and competition rules, and contestant application, are online at www.mwr-europe.com, as well as who to contact at each hosting installation. The deadline for applications to be received by the local hosting installation MWR is as early as July 22 at some sites; check with your local hosting MWR for their application deadline.

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The U.S. Army Installation Management Agency, Europe (IMA-E) is one of seven regional offices created Oct. 1, 2002, as part of an Army-wide initiative to focus management of Army installations around the world under one organization. IMA-E is responsible for all facets of support for U.S. Army Soldiers and families in Europe from drivers licenses to child care to force protection. As the landlord for all U.S. Army facilities in Europe, IMA-E is responsible for infrastructure and continuing the Army's strong commitment to environmental protection. Its higher headquarters is located in Arlington, Va.